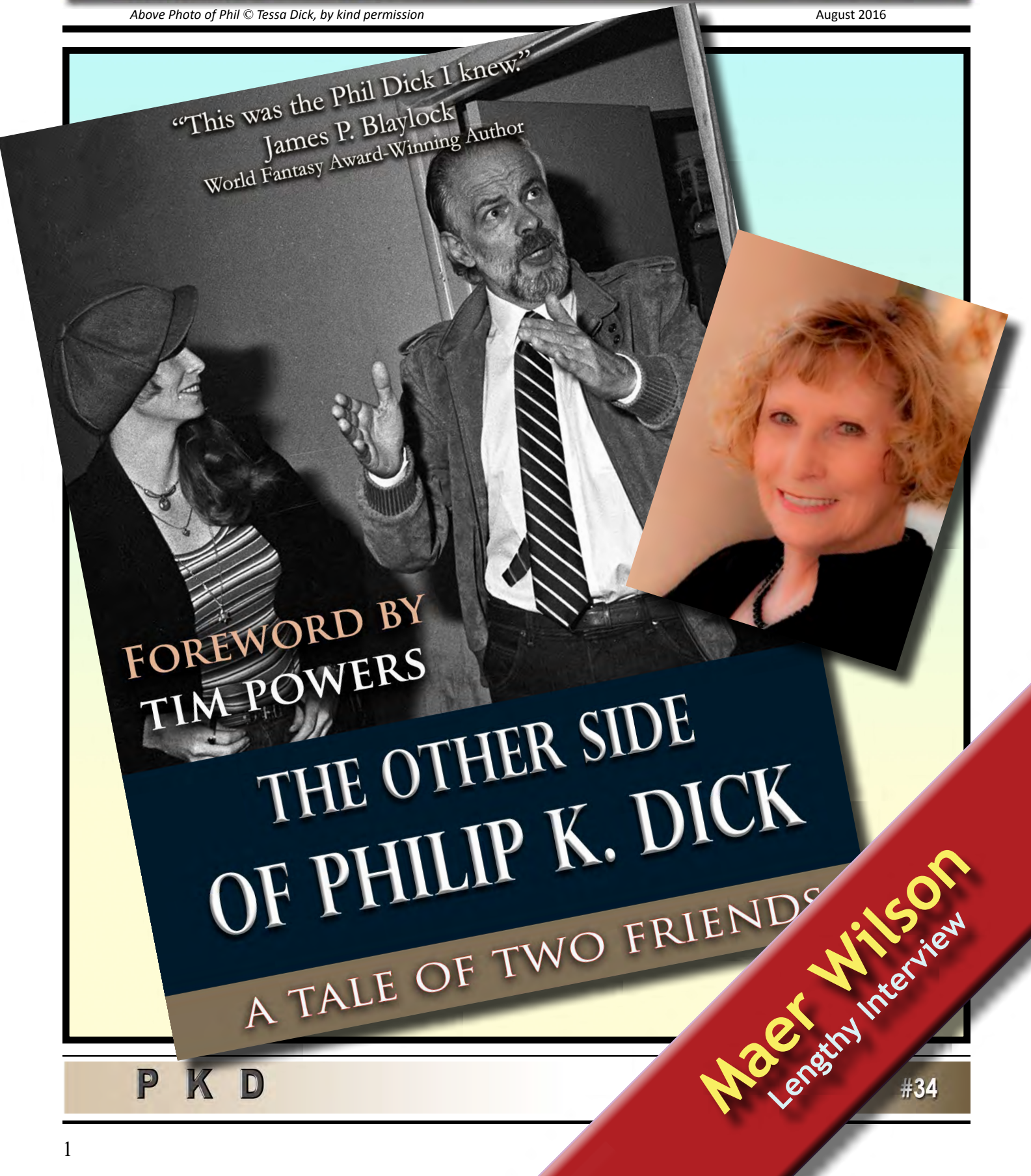


Above Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

August 2016



P K D

#34

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PKD **Otaku** is a zine made by fans for fans.

It exists to celebrate, explore and discuss the work of Philip K Dick.

The PKD Otaku Team have enjoyed the writing and ideas of Philip K. Dick for decades, and continue to do so.

The subject of Philip K. Dick benefits from diverse perspectives, opinions, and insights.

In this zine we hope to explore the Novels, Short-Fiction, Non-fiction and ideas of Philip K Dick.

If you would like to contribute (a letter of comment, an article, essay or review) please make your submission in

MS Doc, Rtf or Txt form to the Otaku Team c/o Patrick Clark via email:

[pkdotaku@gmail.com](mailto:pkdotaku@gmail.com)

All submissions are welcome and considered, but we cannot promise that all will see print.

Thank you for maintaining the dialogue!

-- The PKD OTAKU Team

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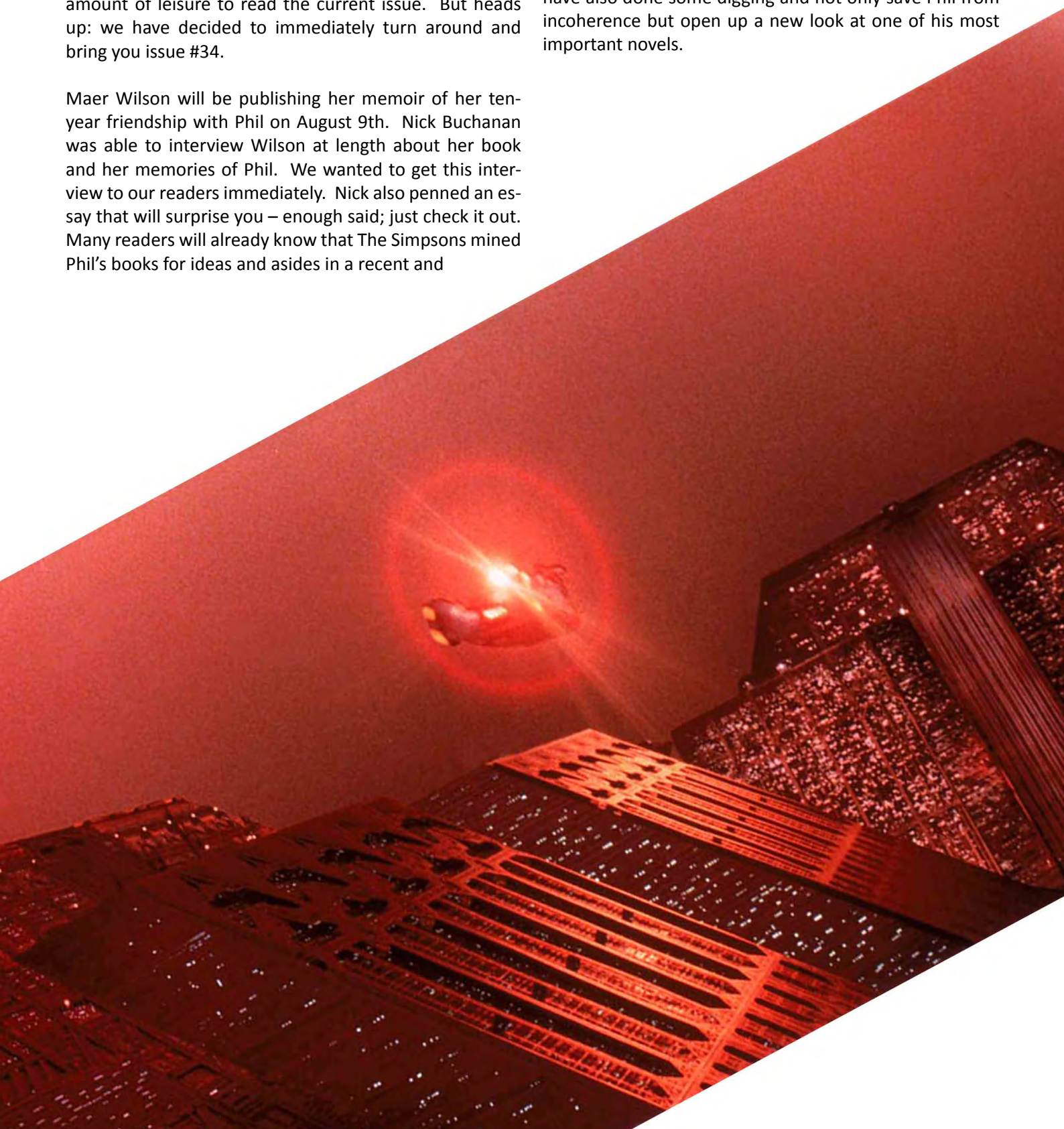
# Editorial

by Patrick Clark

**P**KD Otaku likes to keep everybody on their toes. Many of you might still be chewing over the wealth of material we presented in issue #33. There is a lot to think about in its pages and, after all, it was only published a couple of weeks ago. Our publishing schedule is pretty lackadaisical so normally you'd have a certain amount of leisure to read the current issue. But heads up: we have decided to immediately turn around and bring you issue #34.

Maer Wilson will be publishing her memoir of her ten-year friendship with Phil on August 9th. Nick Buchanan was able to interview Wilson at length about her book and her memories of Phil. We wanted to get this interview to our readers immediately. Nick also penned an essay that will surprise you – enough said; just check it out. Many readers will already know that The Simpsons mined Phil's books for ideas and asides in a recent and

peculiar "Lego" episode. But The Simpsons have been doing that for a long time and we reprint a funny examination of this phenomenon by members of the old PKD listserv. We continue with our "Lighthouse" fanzine story with a full index of that publication and an updated index to PKD Otaku for good measure. Additional information about Phil's mysterious first wife comes courtesy of phildickian archeologist Frank Hollander. And speaking of phildickian archeologist, John Fairchild and Perry Kinman have also done some digging and not only save Phil from incoherence but open up a new look at one of his most important novels.



## Interview with Maer Wilson

by Nick Buchanan

18th July 2016

**Nick:** Thank you for agreeing to do this interview.

**Maer:** Oh I'm just thrilled that you're willing to do it.

**Nick:** Before we talk about you and Philip K. Dick, could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

**Maer:** I met Phil in 1972. I was in Theatre and I stayed in Theatre pretty much up until, oh gosh, I retired right around the late eighties - eighty-eight or eighty nine. I stopped acting and I went into business. I didn't start writing... so, you know I've had people go "since you knew Phil, you've wanted to write all your life?" and I'm like "No." It didn't even cross my mind to write until 2000. I decided I'd write a play; and I wrote a very, very, very bad play. I mean, horrible. It was a musical - a good story, but it didn't work for stage, so I didn't do anything with it. I did take it to one of my former professors who basically said "Good idea, this is terrible." About five years later I decided to turn it into a screenplay which basically solved all of the problems it suffered as a play. Everything that was wrong with it - I fixed, but again I didn't do anything with it, not knowing what to do. And then five years later somebody said that they were writing a book - and I said "That's what I should do, I should write a book!" I sat down and I wrote the first book in my *Modern Magic* series. I sold that in 2012, and then got my rights back and started my own press in 2013. I have three books in that series, and four novelettes and a short story - and then I also have a zombie book. I did a charity anthology for a friend of mine about eight months ago, and then of course, this is my first non fiction book.

**Nick:** So you were involved in the Arts, then moved to business, then returned to the Arts as a writer - and I noticed on your website that you have quite a few books there.

**Maer:** Yes

**Nick:** How did you first get to know Phil?

**Maer:** He moved across the hall from me.

**Nick:** Oh, right. Is that in an apartment?

**Maer:** Yes, it was in an apartment in Fullerton. When he first came to southern California, he had lived, I guess, for a short time with a couple of girls, and that wasn't working out - he was sleeping on their sofa or something like that and it just wasn't working. I think (and Tim Powers would know this better than I) that Joel Stein was one of Will McNally's students and heard that Phil was looking for a place to live. And Joel had recently split from his wife and had room in his apartment. Phil moved into that apartment with Joel Stein (which was directly across the hall from me).



**Nick:** So it was literally just neighbours bumping into one another the way that neighbours do?

**Maer:** Well, he actually came over. They came over, the two of them came over - and that's the very first chapter of the book (*The Other Side of Philip K. Dick*) which is when Merry Lou Malone - who is one of the "dark haired girls" and my best friend - she and I were hanging out and they came over and wanted to know if we wanted to come over for coffee. We were in the middle of a project, making a dress for me. And so we said "No." And they invited us

instead to go to a movie the following week and that's when we all got together - and that would be Tim Powers, Joel Stine, Merry Lou, my roommate Cindy, Phil and me.

**Nick:** Were you familiar with Phil's work before you met him?

**Maer:** Oh not at all. I didn't even read science fiction before I met him.

**Nick:** And at what point in knowing him did you find out that he was this science fiction author with a kind of a "cult" following-?

**Maer:** - You know, I'm not sure. Did he even have a cult following in the 70's? Maybe he did. I never knew him as Phil the author.



**Nick:** Sure. I think there were pockets of people, and that's why I hesitated and used the word "cult."

**Maer:** "-Cult." Yes you're probably right on that.

**Nick:** -I know that in France he was big and in England he was quite big too. I remember reading him in the seventies and being really impressed by him. I never met the man, but I was familiar with the work – and still enjoy it today. But I take your point that he was never heralded with the kind of merit that he deserved.

**Maer:** Not back then, I don't think. But he did later, and he got a taste of it before he died of times to come with of course *Blade Runner* coming out. But he never lived to see the kind of recognition he's got now, obviously.

**Nick:** No. Given the amount of material of his which has now been bought and turned into films, it's a shame he didn't get to see just how popular his ideas would become. And did he tell you he was a writer, from the get-go?

**Maer:** Oh yes, pretty much. Because I was in the original cast for the musical version of *Dandelion Wine* (which I had just finished) and I knew Ray Bradbury.

**Nick:** I'm a huge fan of Ray Bradbury and in one of the earlier PKD Otaku magazines I wrote a tribute to Bradbury on the occasion of his death. Tessa told me that Phil said that Ray was 'the nicest man he ever met-'

**Maer:** And that's the exact opposite of what he told me.

**Nick:** (laughs) Oh right. Well that's really interesting-

**Maer:** And that's in the book too. That part about Ray.

**Nick:** I know Phil could be duplicitous-

**Maer:** -Oh, always. That is the whole thing! And I said this at the Phil Dick Festival in Fullerton (in April) – I said this there, and on the YouTube video on my website – you had to take what Phil said with a salt shaker of salt. You couldn't take him at his word. Because you never knew whether he was running scenarios for books; whether he

was just messing with people; whether he was just teasing you. Now, over the years I got to point where I was pretty good about telling when he was telling the truth and serious, and when he was not - but in the beginning, no.

**Nick:** Is it possible to describe the kind of clues you may have picked up on which showed you the difference?

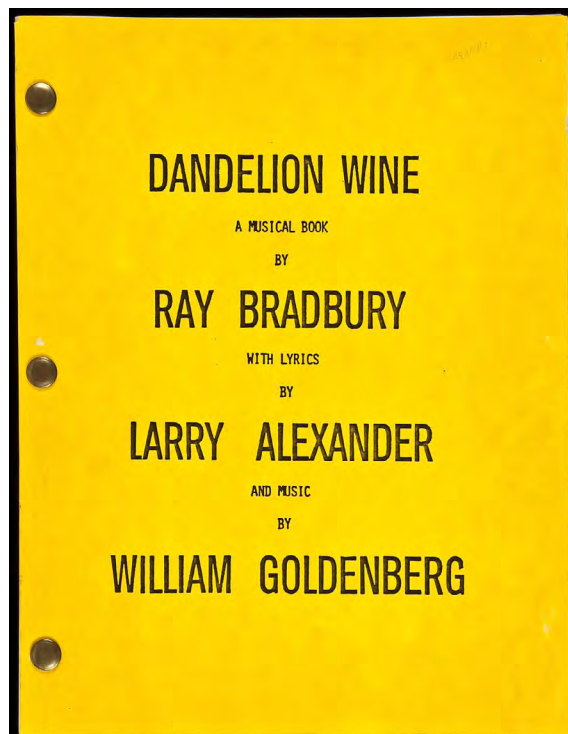
**Maer:** I'm not sure it is. You are talking about tones of voice, expression... it was a lot easier of it was something that he was very passionate about, because that was one of his tells. But then he could have you absolutely going and thinking things, and Tim Powers says this too, how he had him and Jim completely convinced of something one night and the next day laughed about it and said, "Boy I had you guys really going." He had a great sense of humour. Being in theatre I was on tour with five guys, and you learn as the only girl to, number one, not believe anything they say, because you never know when they're messing with you. I had already kind of learned that with Phil, and I took things with a huge grain of salt. But then there were

times when I absolutely knew, *no this is for real this is not one of his games, we need to pay attention to this*. But I'm not sure if I could tell you how I did it. I was very instinctive. You know somebody long enough and eventually you get a handle on their personality and how it meshes with your personality and you just learn the person.

**Nick:** I am interested that one of his tells was when he was passionate about something – and did that indicate that he was being quite straightforward in that sense.

**Maer:** In this particular case I'm remembering him getting upset over the 'novelization' of *Blade Runner*, versus re-releasing *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* I think it was like eleven

to twelve hours that day on that one topic. He was just so back and forth on what to do, and what did he want to do and all of that. I stayed there the whole time – and this scene is in the book, but it's fairly common knowledge that he agonized about that and what to do; whether to take the money, because you know they offered him a lot of money. Whether to take the money, or forget the mon-



ey and just re-release *Androids*, which is what he ended up doing.

**Nick:** I'm glad he made that choice. How would you describe Phil the man as opposed to Phil the writer?

**Maer:** He was eccentric. He had a great sense of humour – it was very dark sometimes, but he had a really good sense of humour. He was quite funny. He was compassionate. He was generous. He was, I think, a better friend than he was a husband or a father. I don't think he was a good husband and I don't think he was a good father – and I think that's pretty self-evident by his relationships with the ex-wives and with his children (which he did not have that close of a relationship with).

**Nick:** I'm really pleased to hear you mention his sense of humour because I think that is something not championed enough about Phil. Often we hear of the serious scholar and the deep researcher, but I always think he had a great sense of the absurd and a wonderful sense of irony. I get that from his books and also from some of his interviews – where he bumps into concepts mid-interview and chuckles and laughs at ideas he has just suggested. He seemed to have a lovely sense of play and playfulness.

**Maer:** He did. I think Paul Sammon says it best and he says this in the blurb on my book. Let me get this because this is exactly how I feel about him. I ran into Paul Sammon at the Philip K. Dick Convention in April and he offered to do a blurb for my book and this is part of what he wrote - Blaylock, World Fantasy Award-Winning Author *"As a literary figure, Philip K. Dick is popularly perceived as a crazed, drug-addled mystic with a sinister Third Eye. Nothing could be further from the truth—the Phil I knew was a warm, humane, very funny man. Maer Wilson understands these truths far better than I, and The Other Side of Philip K. Dick casts a welcome shaft of daylight upon the real PKD, as opposed to the dark, distorted caricature Dick has become."*

**Nick:** I would say Amen to that-

**Maer:** -Yes, I did too! Which is why it's at the top of the back cover of my book.

**Nick:** I think that when people see greatness in others, particularly when it highlights their own mediocrity, they sometimes try to find a reason to account for that person's greatness – so they say *"it was the drugs,"* or *"he was a madman"* or some other reason – instead of just accepting that this was a very intelligent writer with a big heart and a great sense of humour.

**Maer:** Yes. He was very generous. He had a big heart. That woman that he barely knew, that teller at the bank wanting money and he pulled out (I think it was) \$2,000 and gave to her – a virtual stranger, I mean this was not somebody he was friends with.

**Nick:** I'm sure that relates to his whole principle of empathy; human kindness, to feel what others feel – this intrinsic quality that makes us human. And that seems to be displayed in that behaviour. But I'm not trying to make him out to be a saint either-

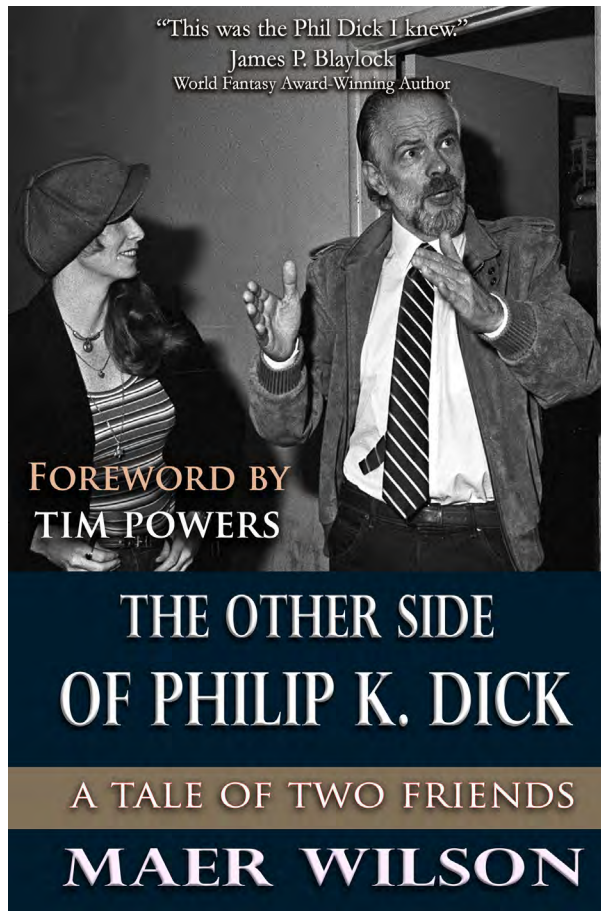
**Maer:** -He wasn't (laughter)

**Nick:** -and we can get to that too, but he was very keen on the concept of empathy-

**Maer:** -Do you know, that's true – and Nick, I had never thought of it in quite those terms before, so I'm glad you brought that up. He was very empathic – very tuned into other people's feelings. I know that if I was upset about something, he would get upset on my behalf.

**Nick:** Which is very empathic. Something we have touched upon is the way that people caricature him as a drug crazed writer or a madman – but I also don't want to fall into the trap of caricaturing him as a saint either – indeed, we both laughed at the idea earlier. So I will ask – was there anything you didn't like about Phil?

**Maer:** If I like somebody I'm pretty non-judgemental. So



I'm usually forgiving of little "faults" that, if I don't like you, would drive me crazy.

**Nick:** I meant it in the sense that we all have little foibles, short-comings and different ways of doing things – and I don't mean that in any judgemental way. Those "faults" could even become endearing. I mean in the sense that sometimes in the best relationships the complementarity is such that each recognises the gifts and the limits of the other.

**Maer:** I just wanted to qualify that none of his faults were enough to drive me away, obviously, or I wouldn't have been friends with him for ten years. But he did take snuff especially in the early years and that was just disgusting.

**Nick:** And this is not a tabloid scoop for you to dish the dirt. My motivation for asking those things is that no one seems to ask those kind of things about Phil-

**Maer:** -No it's a great question! And sometimes he was melodramatic to the point where you weren't sure if something was serious or not – and there's a couple of things in the book that I tell about that to this day I don't know if they're true or not.

**Nick:** That's interesting because the ability to make melodrama out of almost nothing seems to be one of his best skills as a writer-

**Maer:** -Exactly.

**Nick:** -So it must have been hard to switch off when he got so involved in his writing and creating stories.

**Maer:** - That's a good point. I think you're right.

**Nick:** I think that sometimes when people talk about 'compartmentalization' it can be very dangerous in terms of restricting their own compassion and things like that, but in terms of being a writer and saturated in the creative process, it must be very difficult to stop weaving each strand into a tapestry. He seemed to make so much from apparently insignificant material.

**Maer:** Yes. I'm trying to think if I ever got tired of the exaggerations and stuff like that. But mostly, you know, I just blew them off. Coming from Theatre I was used to eccentric people. I was in the Arts from the time I was five years old on. I mean I was raised in the Arts. I was performing from the time I was five. I was second generation. So I was used to different – I liked different. Maybe things that other people who weren't different might not have been able to tolerate, I could close my eyes to a lot easier-

**Nick:** -And who wants normal anyway?

**Maer:** -Exactly. As Louisa says in *The Fantasticks*, "Please God, please don't let me be normal." (laughter)

**Nick:** Indeed! What were your impressions of Ridley Scott?

**Maer:** Well, we only met him that one time and we were maybe in his presence for thirty or forty minutes. We were at the studio for much longer because they took us through and showed us the models of the city and the blimp model – I really wanted the blimp model! This was before we saw the special effects and he and Phil chatted. I really tried to stay in the background, in fact that picture that's out there of me and Phil and Ridley, when I saw them taking it, I ducked my head down because this needs to be about Phil. I later got yelled at from Phil for doing that (laughter). Because I was like "Oh good, they didn't get my face" and he said "You did that on purpose,"- and I'm like "Yes, I did. This was about you and Ridley, this wasn't about me."

**Nick:** Well he obviously wanted you to be in it-

**Maer:** He did. And it's a great picture because Ridley's looking at Phil and Phil's looking at me and I'm hiding my face. And it was taken the same day as the picture that's on the cover of the book.

**Nick:** Yes, I've seen that one. That's a great one and that's a nice little hat you've got on there as well.

**Maer:** Yes I was really glad I wore that hat because I could use it to block my face. I really was trying to support Phil, because it wasn't about me, it was about Phil and Ridley. Kim Gottlieb-Walker took the pictures for that – so all credit to her for taking those photos and for making them available to me.

**Nick:** Indeed. They are great photos too! When Phil and you were walking around these sets of the city (designed by Douglas Trumbull) which look really quite big, I wondered what Phil's impressions were, and if he got a sense of how visually stunning *Blade Runner* was going to be

**Maer:** Yes, he did. From walking around the sets, and after he saw the reel of the special effects, that's when he really was just like 180 degrees from his initial reaction to the film (which was very negative) to a million per cent behind it. Just loved it!

**Nick:** And I understand that you didn't see the whole film, because it wasn't yet completed, but you did see a reel which comprised of segments of the film. Did this reel include the opening shots of the city?



**Maer:** Yes, the opening sequence was in there, but of course we didn't have the Vangelis track. I want to say it was something like 2001: A space Odyssey or something like that. It was classical and appropriate for the viewing. I think it was about ten to fifteen minutes. There is a clip on YouTube which looks very like what we saw that day. We saw special effects. I'll find the link... here it is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUgOKWynhnA> Let's face it, that beginning of *Blade Runner* is one of the most visually stunning opening sequences ever.

**Nick:** It is! And what did you think of the film as a whole?

**Maer:** I loved it! But then I loved it from the beginning when Phil first gave me the script and told me to read it "because it was horrible" and I'm like, "I love it...what is wrong with the script? -" "- Well it's not my book." "-Well it's never going to be about your book, but you need to get over it."

**Nick:** It changed a few times with Hampton Fancher and David Peoples.

**Maer:** Oh, well, Ridley Scott never read the book.

**Nick:** I know, I think that's unbelievable.

**Maer:** I think he read actually read like one or two chapters. So the movie is a few chapters out of the book and in this day and age I'd call it more of an "inspired by" rather than anything else.

**Nick:** Of course, because there is so much missing from 'Do Androids Dream' particularly Mercerism and the religious aspect. I love *Blade Runner* and I really enjoy it, but there is a huge difference between the scope of the film and the scope of the book. I wanted to discuss your book, if we may, because some fans may not yet know that you have a book out about your ten year friendship with Phil. Is it a biography or a memoir? Could you tell us a little bit about it?

**Maer:** I'd love to. It is a memoir. I went that route because other people have done biographies – with these are the facts, this happened on this day at this time – I try to be

accurate as to when things happened, but I don't always remember the exact dates, I sometimes have to say *it was during this month* or *I think it was this year*. I try to be as accurate as I can. I did a lot of research, but this is a memoir, it is about our friendship, about our relationship. I called it *The Other Side of Philip K. Dick* because I was just so tired of the crazy mythologies that are out there about him – they've lost sight of who the real man was. I haven't seen anything recently that doesn't have Phil as pill-popping or into drugs - and you know the last ten years I didn't see him do drugs other than his prescription medication. He didn't do drugs, he was a normal person – well a normal Artist. So that had a lot to do with it. But for years I've been telling the stories from mine and Phil's relationship and everybody is always like you really need to write a book. And a couple of years ago I was talking to Tim Powers and I said "Maybe you and I could co-write a book?" and he and Jim were like- "You need to write your book."

**Nick:** That's Jim Blaylock?

**Maer:** Yes. And we were at The Orange Book Festival, or something like that, a couple of years ago and that's when they said that. And I said okay, but only if you'll proof it and check me for accuracy, and Jim said "Well if I do I'll rip it apart." I said "Please do." So I started writing it, and I'd get up to the last year and I'd stop. And I couldn't finish it. I'd put it aside and I'd go off to write something else. Then I'd come back to it and I'd start at the beginning again and tweak and fix the first part – and then I'd get to the last year and I'd stop again. I did that three or four times. And finally this last year I said to myself you know what, you are not getting any younger, you have got to get off the stick on this and finish this book. I knew the conference was coming up so I gave myself a deadline and said *you will have this in edits by this conference*. So I just sat down and finished

the whole last part of the book in three or four days.

**Nick:** And did it still feel a bit of a 'bump' when you were working through the last chapter?

**Maer:** Yes. It was hard.

**Nick:** I can understand that. You are talking about the loss





of a dear friend, someone you had known for a decade, and it's very hard to deal with that even in writing.

**Maer:** But once I got it down – I did something a little bit different with this book, Nick, and this is what helped me do it – I was talking to somebody about it and I was telling them that when I got up to this last year every time I stalled – and then I got the idea of putting the whole story in the context of music, because music is the first thing that Phil and I connected on. And so I structured the book into a performance with Prelude, First Symphony, Second Symphony and I have given the musical pieces which I think coincide with the feeling of that particular section of the book.



**Nick:** That sounds like a great idea.

**Maer:** And that allowed me to get that last year down. Once I had it down I could go back, I could fill it in. I would talk to someone and they would say 'oh well, don't you remember we did-' and I'd say 'Oh yeah, I forgot about that, let me put that it' because they sparked my own memories. So I was talking to Tim Powers and Jim Blaylock and MerryLou Malone Staylor and my family (who knew Phil as well). So I was pulling on all of these resources and burning strawberry incense and listening to 1970's and 1980's music – anything and everything to bring that time to life as much as possible. And I was glad that I had been telling these stories for all these years because I had them there – I knew them. So that helped a lot. I wrote 16,000 words in two or three days. I just sat down and wrote it all.

**Nick:** Well it must have been there ready to write. I think it is going to give us all another facet of Phil that would otherwise be difficult to conceive - and a first-hand account is always the best.

**Maer:** It doesn't get into too much about what he is working on; I don't dissect any of his books. It is literally *this is*

*the friend.*

**Nick:** Of course, it's about the man.

**Maer:** Yes.

**Nick:** Which is great, particularly with there being so many caricatures of the man, it's good to get a first-hand account.

**Maer:** Gosh, I think so, because I'm so tired of all of these characterizations- "*this is what he did and why he did it-*" and I think "-no it's not. That's not even close!" And it's very frustrating as a friend – and I didn't realize just how huge his fandom had become until I went to the conference, and I was there with Merry Lou and her husband. So keep in mind that two people who met Phil at the same time and knew him for ten years, still together all these years later, she and I were there at this conference and we had to walk out of one of the lectures-

**Nick:** Because it felt inaccurate-

**Maer:** -it was so far off base. And I'm not going to say who it was or anything like that. But Merry Lou looked at me and I looked at her and I'm like "Can you take anymore of this?" -and she's like "No." So we just left. But I can understand why, in their defense, because Phil himself put all this stuff out there and created this whole mythos. I



mean the stuff he put in the Exegesis and everything else, and everybody is taking all of this stuff literally – and that's the whole thing with Phil, you cannot take him literally, unless you've got him right there with you and you say "Okay Phil, I want the truth now, you tell me what this means?" and you might...might...might get an answer that resembles the truth.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Maer:** I'm not meaning that he was a liar. Everything was a story to him.

**Nick:** Indeed, and he obviously had a great sense of play-

**Maer:** -Oh absolutely. He loved messing with people. He

Illustration of Phil and Maer by Eddie Butler

was like “Boy, we really fooled them.”

**Nick:** And this is the storyteller’s art – to weave a spell and have people captive (in a great way).

**Maer:** But it has backfired on him a little bit. I read one article that said he was pill-popping hundreds of pills a day. Nobody can even live popping hundreds of pills a day! It would kill them! How unrealistic can they possibly be? You hear these stories of “violent Phil” and all these crazy things. I never saw Phil angry, but one time – and even that wasn’t a rage – I never saw him in a rage. I never saw him lose his temper. I saw him mad. I saw him very passionate about things, but I never saw the rages that I’ve heard about and “evidence of physical violence” I never even heard about it-

**Nick:** Well, knowing him for ten years, and only ever seeing him angry once (and in a normal healthy way) speaks volumes, because if somebody had a problem in that area, you would have seen some evidence of it-

**Maer:** Oh, sure you would. You would see that right off. He was melodramatic, he loved creating melodrama, he loved watching melodrama and he loved anything that was different. And I would tell him that because I’d hear about all the girlfriends – and they were always “-horrible and awful and terrible, and there was never anything nice about them-” and I said to him once “-Well if that’s the case, if they are that horrible, why do you need that relationship? Walk away.” (*Laughter*) I took his balloon and I popped it! (*Laughter*).

**Nick:** One thing your book is certainly going to do is ‘pop the balloon’ of some of these myths-

**Maer:** Well, I hope so.

**Nick:** -And I think that does your friend, Phil a great service because a lot of people who didn’t know him have been doing him a disservice in that way, in my opinion. I

wonder, as we draw the interview to a close, if you could let people know how and when they could get hold of your book?

**Maer:** Sure. It’ll be out August 9th and it can be pre-ordered as an e-book now from Amazon, Kobo, Barnes and Noble, i-Tunes and of course Smashwords (you can’t pre-order the paperback). And on August 9th the paperback will be available.



**Nick:** And one more thing. You mentioned music being a great connection between you and Phil. Were there any particular pieces that you both adored.

**Maer:** Well it all came about from the ‘*Clockwork Orange*’ film that we saw, the soundtrack to that.

**Nick:** Beethoven’s Ninth?

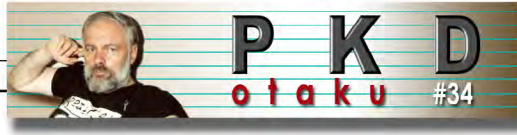
**Maer:** Yes. Beethoven’s Ninth. Beethoven was probably our first connection. I talk about that in the book. Phil was trying so hard to connect with me. I’m sitting there and I’m nineteen and here’s this guy twenty-five years older. I’ve got a boyfriend and I’m not interested in this old guy and he’s trying like crazy to connect with me – I don’t know why – and took me to see *Clockwork Orange* (which I hated initially). And finally it was with music, it was like “Oh here’s the way into her soul.” Once we had that connection

with music, it lasted forever, because he was such an audiophile. I don’t know if people get that or not?

**Nick:** They probably don’t know it as much as you do, but there are little hints of it in his stories where people work in record stores and things like that. But he seemed to love a lot of classical music and Wagner in particular-

**Maer:** I was just going to say that. He introduced me to Wagner and the whole Ring cycle. He played that for me and told me the whole story and I thought it was really interesting. But he was such an audiophile and in his later years had a really, really nice sound system, I mean he





put his money into his sound system. He is the one who taught me how to handle a record - and I have that scene in the book (*Laughter*).

**Nick:** The idea that you are getting *lessons* on how to handle records from Philip K. Dick is just such a great absurd thing, isn't it-

**Maer:** But it's wonderful isn't it?

**Nick:** Of course it's wonderful. And it's part of the details of friendships that are trivial on one level and profound on another - and the stuff of life is surely in these small things

which make up the endearing aspects of our friendships, our loves and our lives. Well, your book sounds tremendous and I'm going to get the paperback when it's out. I think it'll do a great service in setting the record straight. Thank you very much, Maer.

**Maer:** I'm grateful that folks like you will give me the chance to get the word out about it. I want my friend known for who he was.

**Nick:** Thank you.

**Maer:** Thank you.

### **Praise for *The Other Side of Philip K. Dick***

"I found this book engrossing and authentic - a truthful and serious account of the last part of Phil Dick's life by someone who was a fundamental part of it and who has the skill to write about it. There is evident love and friendship in this book, but also honesty. This was the Phil Dick I knew."

**James P. Blaylock**, World Fantasy Award-winning Author

"As a literary figure, Philip K. Dick is popularly perceived as a crazed, drug-addled mystic with a sinister Third Eye. Nothing could be further from the truth - the Phil I knew was a warm, humane, very funny man. Maer Wilson understands these truths far better than I, and *The Other Side of Philip K. Dick* casts a welcome shaft of daylight upon the real PKD, as opposed to the dark, distorted caricature Dick has become."

**Paul M. Sammon**, Author of *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*

"The strongest piece of writing I've read in years. Wilson's pacing is perfection. *The Other Side of Philip K. Dick* is filled with laughter and the kind of love only true friends can share. Even if, for some reason, you've never heard of Philip K. Dick, you will fall in love with him and Wilson. The ending had me crying, like "end of the Notebook" crying. Utter perfection."

**M. Joseph Murphy**, Author of the *Activation* series

"There are many tales of epic friendships, but there is one huge difference here: *The Other Side of Philip K. Dick* is real. Wilson's prose gives us an inside view into two minds, a genius and a young girl. Through her eyes I am left with one thought -- this is a man I wish I had known."

**Danielle DeVor**, author of the *Marker Chronicles*.

"Frank and revealing. One part faithful memoir, one part a wonderful evocation of Phil's final 10 years. Writing with crisp clarity, Maer's humorous anecdotes wonderfully evoke both the times and the man. Her conversational prose sparkles with truth and winning story-telling. Best of all, this warm tribute replaces the oft-told myths about Phil with unique insights into his caring, compassionate and generous nature."

**Daniel Gilbertson**, Friend of PKD

"As a fan of Dick's fiction, I was engrossed by these amusing, insightful, and poignant reminiscences of the last ten years of his life. Wilson evokes a human portrait of a warm, funny, unassuming man who was a good friend to a young student. This memoir is well-written and heart-felt. It illustrates not only the private world of a great writer but what it was like to be young in the seventies in California."

**Carol Holland March**, Author of *The Dreamwalkers of Larreta*



## Correspondence concerning Dick references in the Simpsons

Compiled by Patrick Clark

From The Simpsons 8th Season: "In Marge We Trust"

**From: Forrest Jackson**

Has anyone seen the "Ubik episode" of the Simpsons?

During the intro, Bart and family must pay their couch with coins before they can sit before the TV. Then, during the show, Homer is astounded when he sees his likeness represented on a box of Japanese detergent that he finds at a trash dump. An intensely weird and psychedelic TV advertisement features the round-eyed Homer defeating entropy with his ancient magic cleansing powers. The ad is in fake Japanese and has (epigrammatic?) humorously mistranslated English subtitles. There was another distinctly Ubik like aspect or scene of the episode, but I can't remember it now. Something about half-life?

The correlations seemed irrefutable when I saw the show a few months ago and the above descriptions don't do the situation justice. What do you think?

The Rhipidon Society thrives at:  
<http://www.pentaradial.com/>

**From: "H. Stephen Wright"**

One other Phildickian moment I remember is when Bart, Lisa,

and Homer find the detergent box at the dump. This reminded me of "The Penultimate Truth," i.e., the planting of fake artifacts with a time machine. In fact, when Bart first glimpses the box, he cries, "Maybe it's a box from the future!"

Incidentally, the Japanese dialogue in the television commercial was discussed to death on the alt.tv.simpsons newsgroup. Some Japanese-speaking fans claimed that the Japanese heard was grammatically correct and matched the subtitles shown. I wouldn't know, though.

**From: Erik Jon Spigel**

I'm currently living in Japan. A friend taped this episode for me and sent it to me here. What I can tell you is:

- 1.) The ad isn't fake Japanese. It didn't strike me as good Japanese, though.
- 2.) Japanese advertisements are really like that.
- 3.) No, really. Japanese advertisements are like that.
- 4.) Bad English is a hallmark of living in Japan. Japanese companies seldom employ native speakers of English as translators or as proofreaders.

Come to Japan. See:

- \* Shinjuku at night. The Bladerunner city, complete with billboard-sized TVs.
- \* Weird, almost-real imitations of 1950s America.
- \* Androids.

We call them "salarymen" here. Trust me. It's weirder than you think.



**From: Carey Wilson**

Actually the product is a laundry detergent, with the Homer-lookalike serving as a sort of psychedelic, Japanese Mr. Clean [an iconic American cleaning product advertisement figure from the 1950s-60s]. The company's logo morphs a fish [the eyes] and a vacuum tube [the shape {and contents} of his head] to create the Homeresque appearance. Hence Bart's reference to Homer in the end of the episode as "Fish-bulb."

Didn't really strike me as Dickian at the time I watched it, but it's definitely a classic episode.



**From: Patrick Clark**

Carey,

No, no. It was cereal, remember? And then the pink beam of light struck Mr. Burns and you could see his camera eyes and steel teeth and artificial hand and he was getting ready to take over all of West Hem? Then Bart sprayed him with a can of Ubik and he began to change into a slime mold but then Smithers shot Bart with an LSD dart and Bart thought he was in an underwater cathedral on another planet. But Marge took some JJ-180 and went back in time to just after Smithers was born and put a nuclear bomb in his chest that would detonate when he said "Yes, Mister Burns" the first time, so Burns and Smithers and the power plant went up in a big mushroom cloud which unfortunately included Springfield as well but Lisa had, fortunately, developed a time scoop in her science class and had sent back a fake Springfield to be destroyed, meanwhile moving the real town to Frolix-8 and saved all the inhabitants but she then lost the town in a best two-out-of-three games with the aliens from Titan but, luckily, a Gnostic Christian from the first century C.E. named Apu took over Homer's brain and set everything to right -- except now instead of a box of cereal Homer finds a box of detergent in the garbage dump. Remember? That's the show I saw -- didn't you?

Or as Kevin said in VALIS "Could the movie change every time you see it? Holy fuck!"

Confusedly yours, Patrick

**From Nick Buchanan**

In the Simpson's 550th Episode 'Brick Like Me,' his family and everyone in Springfield is made of Lego and he must 'put together' how he got there, if they are to get back home. The nested realities within the layers of fakery would please Umberto Eco or Jean Baudrillard. (*Spoilers ahead*)... Lego Homer forgets that he was ever a cartoon and is shocked when he bumps into reminders. He is not who he thinks he is - but unbeknown to him his desired return to his 'normal' form would still leave him as a cartoon - an ersatz person.

The episode is riddled with references to Philip K. Dick. Homer buys Lisa a set of 'Perky Patty's Princess shop' (an obvious reference to Perky Pat from 'The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch' and Dick's short story 'The Days of Perky Pat'). Lego Homer imagines building the set with Lisa - in his imagination he is a cartoon (as we know him) and not a Lego character. In a bathroom mirror, Lego Homer sees himself reflected as a cartoon - and is shocked. He ignores this and goes back to his 'normal' Lego life. Throughout the episode, Lego Homer sees cartoon versions of himself and others - then his hands become cartoon even though the rest of him is Lego.

The Comic Book Guy tells Homer that the Lego world is a fiction in Homer's mind, an unconscious reaction against the idea of everyone growing old. Nevertheless Homer wants to stay in Lego World. Eventually Homer decides that he must return to his non Lego form and he visits the



Comic Book Guy for further advice. He realizes that the Comic Book Guy is actually the one trying to keep him in this Lego World. Bart builds a huge robot from Lego pieces and they defeat the Comic Book Guy and manage to become cartoons again.

In **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch** (*Spoiler alert*) the bored workers on Mars use dolls (Pat and Walt) whose 'world' they can enter into with the aid of the drug Can-D. Sam Regan does this and 'becomes' Walt (forgetting he was ever Sam). In his bathroom he sees a note in his own handwriting tacked up. It says:

THIS IS AN ILLUSION, YOU ARE SAM REGAN, A COLONIST ON MARS. MAKE USE OF YOUR TIME OF TRANSLATION, BUDDY BOY. CALL UP PAT PRONTO. - the note was signed Sam Regan (p.42)

The Comic Book Guy is in the role of Palmer Eldritch - he is the saviour / betrayer who ensnares. The whole idea of nested realities (the Lego within the cartoon) is reminiscent of any number of Dick stories where protagonists become unsettlingly aware that there are alternate realities - *and they are living in one (or more)!*

This whole Simpson's episode is packed with puns and gags in the background (shops like Brick-E-Mart etc.). What is of special interest to Dick fans is that in the Comic Book Guy's shop there are books on display by Philip K. Brick. Amongst others are:

"The Three Brickmata of Palmer Elbrick" = "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch"

"Ubrick" = "Ubik"

"The Minifig in the High Castle" = "The Man in the High Castle"

"A Scanner Blockly" = "A Scanner Darkly" [13]

"Do Minifigs Dream of Plastic Sheep?" = "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" [14]

"Beyond Lies the Stud" = "Beyond Lies the Wub" [15]

"Sort My Pieces, the Policefig Said" = "Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said" [16]

The Lego version of "We Can Build You" is called (*can't you guess?*) "We Can Build You."

References and photos sourced from:

<https://www.yahoo.com/tv/bp/29-things-you-may-have-missed-in-the-simpsons-lego-episode-005659024.html>





## Random PKD quotes collected by JPC

**S**urely everyone has a set of these. You read something of Phil's and it hits you for whatever reason. A passing fancy, a bit of real wisdom, something crazy (crazier than usual I mean), a reminder of something, a clever way to state some truth, a funny observation, support of some argument... Who knows why you copy it down. You just do. This collection started decades ago and I continue to add to it still.

It's a cardboard universe, Jamis, and if you lean too hard against it you fall through, but god knows into what.  
(Letter to Jamis: Nov 23, 1972)

I frankly consider myself one of the mass men that mutant stories constantly knock. To be honest, I'm not telepathic, psychokinetic, or anything else. I can't teleport myself, read tomorrow's newspapers, or turn lead into gold. I can't read minds, I can't lift dice at fifty paces—I can't do anything but ride the street car, read pulp magazines, listen to the radio, and do all the rest of the things mass-men do. (Letter to James McKimmey, December 1963)

What's interesting in this is, without my intending this, in order to write [The Cosmic Puppets] I had to do some research into religion. Into Zoroastrianism. And this turned out to be a turning pointing my life. Because although I had researched Zoroastrianism simply to write a novel. I found that once I had studied a dualistic, bitheistic religion, it was very hard for me to go back to monotheism after that. I think that once I got the hang of bitheism it was hard to drop it after I had finished reading it.

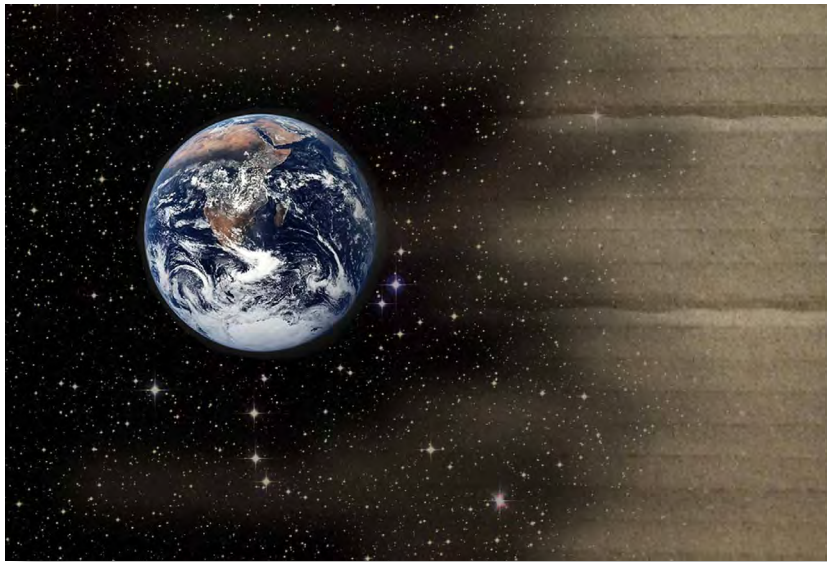
So it had influenced me spiritually, theologically, religiously, whatever the word is, the amount of research I did. That has not been my intention." (Gregg Rickman, *Philip K. Dick: In His Own Words* (1984) pg.125)

My 3-74 experiences are an outgrowth of my Palmer Eldritch experience of over ten years earlier. "Faith of Our Fathers" shows this, too.... (*Exegesis* 1975)

Is it possible that Lovecraft saw the truth? That realms and wickedness such as he describes, for example in *The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, actually exist. Imagine taking a dose of LSD and finding yourself in Salem. You would go mad. ("Will the Atom Bomb Ever Be Perfected?" 1966)

Meanwhile, I have started on a novel which I think is a giant step forward for me. I am not going to do an outline on this one. It is, I think a totally new sort of novel for me, one in which the nature of reality is firmly stated; there won't merely be layer after layer of illusion. I had the idea before the Baycon, and when I came away from it I had a totally new piece of material emerging, perhaps because of what I said there and what was said to me. Perhaps I was too timid in the past to dare say what reality was; I only felt competent to say what was illusion. My confidence in myself is much greater at this point than it ever was before in my seventeen years of s-f writing and selling. (PKD to Lawrence Ashmead: September 7, 1968)

I remember when I was a child on December 7, 1941 and



there was the news on the radio about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor; I phoned my mother to tell her. "We're at war with Germany, Italy and Japan!" I yelled, to which she replied calmly, "No, I don't think so, Philip," and went back to her gardening. I was 12 years old and I was more in touch than a grown person. That made a big impression on me, my mother's failure to

react; it was both an intellectual failure and an emotional one, if you ponder it. This is maybe one reason I get along so well with people a lot younger than me; I have little respect for the opinions of people my own age. I think the older you get the dumber you get; I mean people in general. You start losing touch with reality by subtle, gradual

degrees until you wind up puttering around with your flowers in the backyard while World War Three breaks out. (PKD to Laura Dick, April 2, 1979)

I have taken amphetamines, LSD, Mescaline and phenothiazines. (PKD to Dwayne Boggs September 9, 1976)

World War Three hasn't started yet. Just feints emanating out of Hamilton Air Force Base. Mind-disorienting drugs, systemic toxins, psychological warfare techniques, plus combat operations: seize and search. Hit, destroy, and carry off. Special operators in the field whose real purpose, as the magazine *Earth* says about the CIA, is to "peddle dope and off people." (From *The Dark-Haired Girl* pg. 16)

The "darkly" in the title of course refers to a darkening of human mental faculties, of both perception and mentation. I saw among my friends (and in myself) such a darkening overcast that sometimes we seemed unable to fathom the most commonplace events; worse, commonplace events seemed animated by evil powers to us, ready to fight us and destroy us as agents of invisible superagencies. And then to make matters worse our occluded activities eventually attracted the attention of the authorities, who were as mystified as we as to what the hell we were up to. Since this was 1971 to 1972, the dark days of the Nixon secret police action, the authorities saw political significance in what we were doing – when in fact our wildest schemes called for nothing more than stealing a can of transmission fluid to keep an old car running. The authorities, we discovered, were as occluded as we...and they had the clout to back it up. (PKD to Andy Ellmore: March 21, 1977)

The greatest menace of the twentieth century is the totalitarian state. It can take many forms: left-wing fascism, psychological movements, religious movements, drug Rehabilitation places, powerful people, manipulative people; or it can be in a relationship with someone who is more powerful than you psychologically. Essentially, I'm pleading the cause of those people who are not strong. If I were strong myself I would probably not feel this as such a menace. I identify with the weak person; this is one reason why my fictional protagonists are essentially

anti-heroes. They're almost losers, yet I try to equip them with qualities by which they can survive. At the same time I don't want to see them develop counter-aggressive tactics where they, too, become exploitative and manipulative. (Source: Charles Platt, *Who Writes Science Fiction* (1980) pp. 166-67.)

The novels which I've written that I later found myself in are *UBIK*, *FLOW MY TEARS* and *THE UNTELEPORTED MAN*. (PKD in a letter to Richard Weinberg, March 6, 1979)

Oddly, most of my writing tends to be fantasy of a religious, drifting nature, ill-suited for worldly things or large publications. All I can say to defend it is that people who read it are disturbed, and go off brooding, very puzzled and unhappy. "Roog," as you slyly guessed, is my first acceptance. (11-8-51 letter to the editors of *F&SF* magazine)

Actually, I think all human minds, sick or well, have regions of dream symbolism; I see nothing morbid in these symbolic worlds...they have their own logic and struc-

ture, their own typical relationships, as Lewis Carroll showed. Not a chaotic or formless world, at all...a world that fascinates me. But perhaps not of interest to fantasy readers. Yet, I don't know what else to call this.... I see myths as symbolic proto-type experiences, archaic and timeless, occurring in the

individual subconscious. The fairy tale, the myth, the dream, are all related. And I see nothing morbid in it... (*Selected Letters*, vol. 1, p. 33)

It is just as easy to think of the future pushing the present into the past as to think of the past generating the present and moving toward the future... *Exegesis*

God's learning about absolute evil from the relative evil of evil events in cosmological history, would infringe on the absolute quality of God's goodness, since to know of evil is to become to some extent evil. Therefore, soon after creation, God became diminished -- or tainted -- by knowledge of evil, and, like man, fell into the realm of the Curse (which is an expression of that knowledge of evil by what had been purely good). It has taken God thousands if not millions of years to work his way back out of this critical situation, and, as stated before, the appearance of



God in the form of the Redeemer is a sign that he has managed to climb back upward sufficiently to reintroduce new good into his creation. God, then, is once again available to man, and vice versa. (From Philip K. Dick, "Notes on the <TENCH> novel" [*A Maze of Death*] circa 1968: RF-PKD #7 (August 1998))

"One of these days . . . people like me will rise up and overthrow you, and the end of tyranny by the homeostatic machine will have arrived. The days of human values and compassion and simple warmth will return, and when that happens someone like myself who has gone through an ordeal and who genuinely needs hot coffee to pick him up and keep him functioning when he has to function will get the hot coffee whether he happens to have a poscred readily available or not" -- Joe Chip, *Ubik*

Religion ought never to show up in SF except from a sociological standpoint, as in *Gather Darkness* [a novel by Fritz Leiber]. God per se, as a character, ruins a good SF story; and this is as true of my own stuff as anyone else's. Therefore I deplore my *Palmer Eldritch* book in that regard. But people who are a bit mystically inclined like it. I don't. I wish I had never written it; there are too many horrid forces loose in it. When I wrote it I had been taking certain chemicals and I could see the awful landscape that I depicted. But not now. Thank God. *Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi* [Lamb of God who lifts the sins of the world]

"Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected?" (1966) Lawrence Sutin, *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick* pg. 58

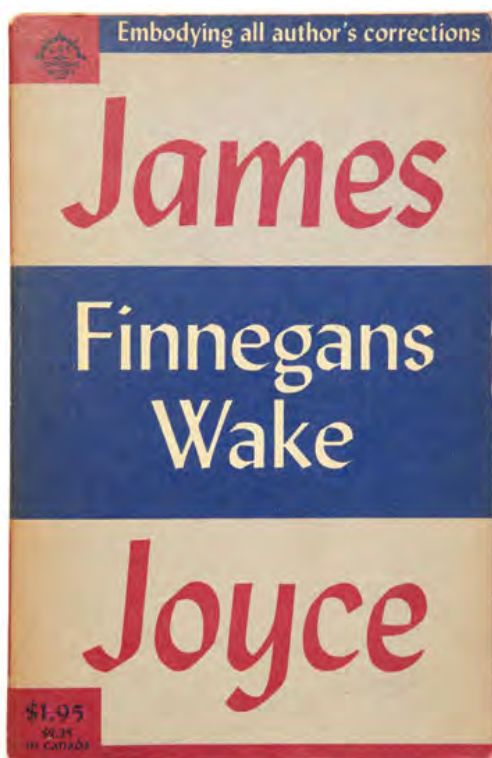
"I'm totally against organized religion. I believe you have a direct relation with the divine or you have no relation with the divine. It has nothing to do with faith or dogmatic creeds. The initiative comes from the divine side. There is nothing you can do. All you can do is live an honest life, be brutally honest with yourself, and hope to become an object of interest with the divine beings. Using a formula to evoke them is technically called "magic." I guess you could call me a neo-Platonist with gnostic overtones."

George Cain & Dana Longo, "Philip K. Dick: Confessions of A SF Artist," Denver Clarion, October 23, 1980

When I do a novel, I am "there," within that world, among its people, involved in its idiosyncratic customs, etc. I am not thinking about it; I am participating... Like they say, my books don't signify anything; they simply are. (Letter to Terry Carr: November 20, 1964)

The love of money is the root of all evil. The scent of possible big money is the root of all manic insanity.

(Letter to Andy \_\_\_\_: May 21, 1968)



Someday I'm going to get my article published: I'm going to prove that *Finnegan's Wake* is an information pool based on computer memory systems that didn't exist until a century after James Joyce's era; that Joyce was plugged into a cosmic consciousness from which he derived the inspiration for his entire corpus of work. I'll be famous forever. (*Divine Invasions*: chapter 1)

Divorce should be listed in REVELATIONS as one of the tribulations of the Last Days along with fire, famine, plague and flood. The five horsemen, not four. I can just see the horseman titled "divorce;" he is holding in his arms a great scroll reading SPOUSAL AND CHILD SUPPORT COURT ORDER, and he is

grinning to bet hell. (Letter to Charles Platt: December 4, 1978)

Every time I try to care about a spiritual matter I have to bust my ass earning more money. (Found among the 1975-76 letters)

I received in the mail Richard Nixon's autograph which I wrote and asked for a year ago. Turns out his autographs are fakes; he has machines which mimic his signature. There is a Phil Dick s-f story there somewhere. (Letter to Russell Galen: August 22, 1979)

I've always feared that someday one of my novels would come out with my name as Philip K. Duck on the cover or

title page. (Letter to Ralph Vicinanza: May 4, 1976)

Yes, there is a basic satire and humor throughout my writing. Like Abraham Lincoln, I have to see the funny side of life, the pataphysical side, or otherwise the tragedy, the many little sorrows, become too much for me. (Quoted in *Psychotic* fanzine circa late 1967-68)

The trouble with being educated is that it takes a long time; it uses up the better part of your life and when you are finished what you know is that you would have benefited more by going into banking. (*Transmigration of Timothy Archer* p. 13)

This is why I love SF. I love to read it; I love to write it. The SF writer sees not just possibilities but wild possibilities. It's not just "What if..." It's "My God; *what if...*" In frenzy and hysteria. (introduction to *The Golden Man*)

So I ask, in my writing, What is real? Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms. I do not distrust their motives; I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing. ("How To Build A Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later")

Burroughs is right about the Nova Police and their tracking down their quarry. (*Exegesis* [16:29])

So JOINT, EYE, STIGMATA, UBIK, MAZE, and TEARS are progressive parts of one unfolding true narrative, in which the genuine Hermetic macro-microcosmology is put forth....

SCANNER continues the narration of the previous six novels, not treating the objective outer world as unreal but going back to "Imposter" and studying false inner iden-

tity and loss memories of the true self!!

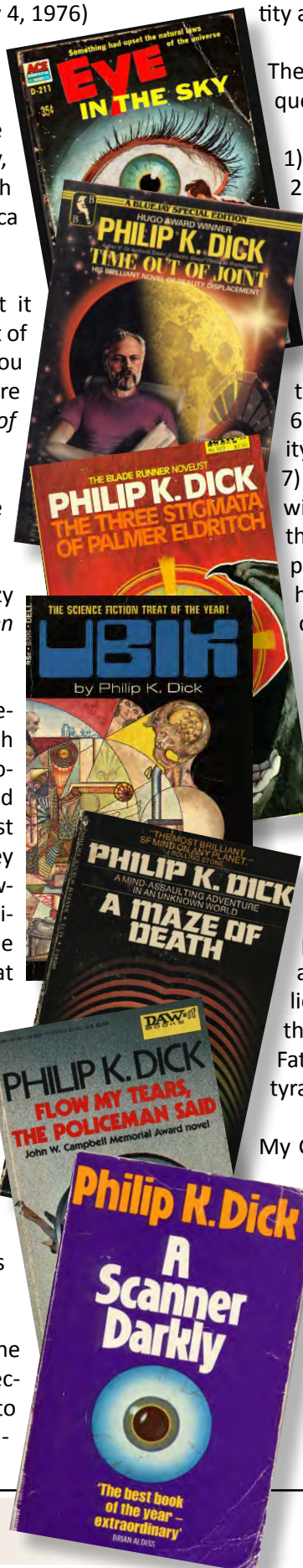
The info conveyed chronologically in the sequence of books is interesting.

- 1) EYE plural and subjective worlds,
- 2) JOINT world as simulated deliberately,
- 3) STIGMATA plural hallucinated worlds concocted by an evil magician-like deity,
- 4) UBIK messages of assistance penetrating the simulated world(s) "from the other side" by/from a salvific true deity,
- 5) MAZE simulated world fabricated by us, to escape an intolerable actuality
- 6) TEARS the nature specifically of that actuality (an intolerable one -- the BIP of Acts)
- 7) SCANNER buried memories connected with lost identity; and protospeech breaking through, not into world as in UBIK but inside a person's head. Two Psychoi one in each brain hemisphere, each with its own name and characteristics.

Plus such stories as "Imposter," "Retreat Syndrome," "Electric Ant," "Human Is" & "Precious Artifact," a very good one. & related themes in TIME-SLIP, MITHC, PEN-ULTIMATE TRUTH, GAME-PLAYERS, also even UNTELEPORTED MAN, (ANDROIDS DREAM treats memory-identity theme). *Exegesis* (Sutton pg. 166)

From *Frolix-8* to *Tears* to *Scanner*: a logical progression of an in-depth study of jail, tyranny, dope, slave labor camps, and irreality to lies (this last point mostly in *Scanner*). Something of this seems hinted at in "Faith of Our Fathers," too: lies, delusions (induced by drugs), tyranny. (*Exegesis* [31:77])

My God, my life – which is to say my 2-74/3-74 experience – is exactly like the plot of any one of 10 or my novels or stories. Even down to fake memories and identity. I'm a protagonist from one of my books. USA 1974 fades out, ancient Rome fades in and with it the Thomas personality and true memories. Jeez! Mixture of *Imposter*, *Joint* and *Maze* – if not *Ubik* as well. (*Exegesis* [16:10])





Axiom: The best forgeries go undetected. On a scale of increasing perfection there is an inverse ratio to detection. Those which we do detect are signs which point toward better (undetected) ones. (*Exegesis* [16:21])

*Ubik* is true. So, too, then, probably *Tears* and *Maze* and *3 Stigmata*. (*Exegesis* [38:21])

[16:45] If the above theory is wrong (and there is no negative hallucination and spurious reality laid over the real world – which is quite different than what seems to be –) then what has been the use of my writing? Also *why* have I been motivated for 27 years to belabor this one theme (including fake memories as an inner analog to fake outer world)?

Is it all just foolishness? My writing has to be dismissed (including the “Acts” and NT material in *Tears* and the “exculpation” cipher, i.e., the good news) and my 2-74/2-75 experience has to be dismissed as a psychotic break. And God didn’t aid in pulling down the tyranny; there was no in-breaking, as depicted in the *Tears* dream.

*Everything* has to be dismissed – my life’s work means nothing, my most treasured experience – and I am and have been just crazy –

Because everything is interwoven, it either all stands or it falls. Such stories as “Precious Artifact” and “Electric Ant” and “Retreat Syndrome” tell us nothing – not to mention the novels.

*Ubik* tells us nothing?

And four years and four months of exegete – wasted.

The true actual time is c. A.D. 45 – since then mere “Palmer Eldritch time” has ballooned out for us. (*Exegesis* [21:18])

I agree: the novels for Ace were written by someone who is not really Phil Dick, but only bears the name.

(PKD to Peder Carlsson: May 5, 1969)

He saw a figure with impassive eyes, like those in late Medieval paintings, not lifeless but – totally tranquil. One hand was raised as a gesture toward him, the hand slightly extended forward so that it was available to be touched; he did not need to touch it however – just seeing it, knowing it was there: that was enough.

The figure was Christ.

So the gaff at the end of the long spear, that was not the only point of contact; it could be done through Christ

without that agony. All he had to do was raise his own hand and reach; the figure would never move away, disappear or retreat or become insubstantial: he might lose sight of it, but it would remain; only his own ability to see would dim. And it had stood there forever, like the Antagonist, and would always; it was as if caught by a great Giotto or Fran Angelico painting – it had eternity about it, and if he did not reach it now he would later, eventually; he would draw back now because he did not own the means to advance closer to it – or even to remain here seeing it from a distance – but it would not withdraw.

And then the drugs wore off. (Deleted paragraphs from the first draft of “The Kneeling Legless Man” [*Dies Irae*])

The Empire is...the codification of derangement; it is insane and imposes its insanity on us by violence since its nature is violent one. To fight the empire is to be infected by its derangement. This is a paradox. Whoever defeats a segment of the empire becomes the empire. It proliferates like a virus imposing its form on its enemies; thereby it becomes its enemies. (*Exegesis* 41)

That’s the trouble with living in a police state, he said to himself; you think – you imagine – the police are behind everything. You get paranoid and think they are beaming information to you, in your sleep, to subliminally control you. Actually, the police wouldn’t do that. The police are our friends.

Or was that idea beamed to me subliminally? he wondered suddenly. “The police are our friends.” The hell they are! (*Lies, Inc.* chapter 1)

The long path is the short path—ponderous books of philosophy won’t help me; Burroughs’ *Junky* will. (*Exegesis* 1:24)

[32:7] I wonder what you get if you sit down starting with “Roog” and read through everything (including such strange stories as “Retreat Syndrome”) all the way to *Scanners*. If everything interlocks, what is the total message? pg. 275

Correct sequence:

(1) *Scanner*: Occlusion of our minds, without our being aware of it; loss (forgetfulness) of true identity

(2) *Tears*: What our world is really always like which the

“UBIK is True.”

“The true actual time is AD. 45.”

occlusion is deliberately there to keep us from seeing (3) *Stigmata*: Who/what deliberately occludes us: the Yaltabaoth Magician evil deity, spinner of spurious worlds, creator of illusion and inhabiting, contaminating (unclean) presence in these degraded pseudo worlds (4) *Maze*: The negative hallucination MO of the occlusion, and reference to Savior who extricates us from a hopeless trap and pseudo world

(5) *Ubik*: The salvific entity per se, by name and how its "Pansophiaistic" messages come through the trash layers to aid us. Past available within the present.

(6) *Do Androids*: A vital theme, that of Mercer and his reality through some sort of mystic identification via empathy. The role of animals. The tomb world. The "fakeness" of fakeness: my "2 slit" logic.

(7) "Impostor": Disinhibiting stimulus restoring blocked memory (v. [1])

(8) "Faith of...": God, evil, communism, drugs, hallucinations—a montage of many elements

(9) Every other relevant story and novel, from *Joint* to "Remember Wholesale," "Electric Ant," "Retreat Syndrome," etc., not listed in (1) through (8). Pg 406

[2:12] The *only* models for this that I've ever even heard of, let alone know, are my own stories and novels. This situation appears again and again. Take the story "Retreat Syndrome." Or the novel *Maze*. The same idea (as has been pointed out to me by all sorts of readers) is reworked again and again, obsessively and endlessly; viz: I keep trying out new ways to account for this situation:

- (A) you see world X and have memories to match.
- (B) that world X is unreal, a delusion, and hides *real* world Y, and the memories in you are faked to match fake world X.

The explanations for this change, but the paradigm does not. I'd state the paradigm this way:

A group of people live in a particular world, i.e., time and place. Then one or more of them begins by degree to discover (or the reader learns) that that world is only a veil or delusional world covering another, *real* one, which the characters once knew about—lived in—but have both forgotten and can no longer perceive. In a variety of ways the latent, hidden, forgotten real world shows through or intrudes, or abolishes entirely the surface, delusional

world, and their real memories of it return. This is exactly what happened to me in 2-74, then more so in 3-74, and then I found that hidden, real world depicted in the novel I wrote four years earlier—which was released the very week (2-74) I remembered the truth. (p. 385)

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand 'Retreat Syndrome' entirely myself, but it seems to have something to do with hallucinations. I understood it when I wrote it, and Terry [Carr] evidently understood it when he selected it for the collection (or did he? Maybe not.)" --PKD to Ted Pauls: June 6, 1969. SL1 pg. 262.

"Like Cordwainer Smith, I was taken over by my own S-F universe." -- *Exegesis* [18:23]



"However, I do think one could say this: rather than having it read: *UBIK*, by Philip K. Dick, one could put it this way: PHILIP K. DICK by Ubik." -- PKD to Peter Fitting: June 28, 1974.

"After reading Burroughs, I dipped into *Ubik*. It certainly would be easy—and reasonable—for a reader to think that both Burroughs and I know something, and we want our novels to be taken as at least partly true." -- PKD *Exegesis* [29.9]

"I will reveal a secret to you. I like to build universes that *do* fall apart. I like to see them come unglued, and I like to see

how the characters in the novels cope with this problem." -- *How to Build a Universe that Doesn't Fall Apart in Two Days*

The concept of selective awareness, for example. That could explain so much of what seems paradoxical about the reports we've been getting about illusions that seem real. The mind selects, out of a mass of sense data, those ones of all possible items to pay attention to, to react to, to treat as "real." But who knows what the mind may be rejecting, what lies unseen out there in the world? Perhaps these illusions are not illusions at all, but real things that ordinarily are filtered out of the stream of incoming sense data by our intellectual demand for a logical and consistent world. Why were they unable, previously, to hurt us? Because, quite literally, what we don't know can't hurt us. -- *The Ganymede Takeover* 1967



## An Update on Jeanette Marlin (Jeannette Ryder)

by Frank Hollander

My 2012 article in PKD Otaku #26, "First of Five: the Mystery of Jeanette Marlin," discusses Philip K Dick's first wife, Jeanette Marlin, whom he married and divorced in 1948. Official census and birth records that I uncovered establish that she was born on January 1, 1927, which is contrary to the very sketchy portraits in the Dick biographies of a significantly older woman.

Additional information has appeared on genealogical web sites more recently--apparently supplied by extended family members--that fleshes out the still rather minimal outline we have of her life. Marlin's family name was adapted from the Finnish name Maillanen or Miilanen. She remarried in 1954 in San Francisco, to John B. Ryder (reportedly born around 1916, and now deceased). They had a son, Daniel F. Ryder, born in 1959 in Bakersfield, California. Marlin died on February 17, 2008 in Torrance, California. Her grave marker in Lake Forest, California displays her name as Jeannette Julia Ryder.

The discrepancy between the spelling "Jeannette" and "Jeanette" suggests to me that Jeannette was her legal name, but that she also used Jeanette, at least when she was young. It is also possible that the Jeanette spelling is simply erroneous, despite its appearance in some official records and its propagation in most of the writings concerning her marriage to Dick. The spelling on the grave marker, in the absence of much other firm

evidence, is enough for me to conclude that Jeannette should be our preferred spelling.



Jeannette Marlin

## Lighthouse Index

Last issue we discussed Philip K Dick's correspondence to Terry Carr's Lighthouse fanzine. In this issue we are printing an (incomplete) index of issues and contents.

LIGHTHOUSE #1- 15			Database		
Issue	Page	Category	Title	Person	Notes
1		cover		Bjo Wells	later Bjo Trimble
1		article	Happy Town	Pete Graham	as Peter G. Scott
1		editorial	Takin' Care of Business	Pete Graham	
1		article	Charles Burbee: The Complete Machiavelli	Terry Carr	
1		article	Umbrage A Burbee	Robert Bloch	
1		ramblings	Fuggit!	Don Wegars	
1		ramblings		Bob Tucker	
1		article	The Mind of Chow	Charles Burbee	reprinted from INNUENDO #7, Feb 1958
1		ramblings	Muskrat Ramble	Terry Carr	as Carl Brandon
1		illustration		Bill Rotsler	
1		illustration		Bjo Wells	
2		cover		Ray Nelson	
2		editorial		Pete Graham	
2		article	Hydra County	Ted White	as Theodore W. Edwards
2		article	The Graham Fan Survey	Pete Graham	as Dr. Longdog, P.U.D.
2		fiction	The Hieronymus Fan	Terry Carr	reprinted from RAGNAROK #6, July 1960
2		article	You Don't Look Like Graham to Me	Ron Ellik	
2		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
2		illustration		Dave Rike	
2		illustration		Bill Rotsler	
2		illustration		Bjo Trimble	
3		cover		Ray Nelson	
3		editorial	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
3		article	Ben Singer, Pride of the DSFL	Ray Nelson	
3		cartoons	Brother Gregory	Andy Reiss	
3		fiction	Sometimes I'm Happy	Pete Graham	serious fiction
3		cartoons	On The Beat	Ray Nelson	
3		column	Fapa on Wry	Ted White	
3		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
3		letters	Klein Comment	Jack Speer	
3		letters	Klein Comment	Walter Breen	
3		letters	Klein Comment	Ray Nelson	



3		letters	Klein Comment	Alvin Fick	
4		cover		Arthur Thomson	
4		editorial	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
4		fiction	Blind Clarinet	Terry Carr	serious fiction
4		column	Fapa on Wry	Ted White	
4		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
4		satire	The 2.3 Second Minute	Carol Carr	as Robert Linseed
4		article	Flea in the Beat Ointment	Ray Nelson	
4		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
4		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
4		letters	Lighthouse Letters		
4		poem		Ray Nelson	
4		bacover		George Metzger	
5		cover		Arthur Thomson	
5		editorial	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
5		novel	One Summer with Elinor	Terry Carr	chapter one of a serious novel
5		article	The Loves of Yesteryear	Richard Bergeron	reprinted from WARHOON #14, Jan 1962
5		column	Fapa on Wry	Ted White	
5		cartoons	Out Berkeley Way	Dave Rike	
5		article	Darkhouse	Alva Rogers	
5		satire	A Fable for Fapa	Bill Donaho	
5		column	The Perforated Finger	Walt Willis	
5		column	The Kookie Jar	Bill Rotsler	
5		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
5		column	Big Dorf's Special	Gary Deindorfer	
5		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
5		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
5		lettercol			
5		comments	Re: the Graham Petition	Boyd Raeburn	
5		comments	Re: the Graham Petition	Redd Boggs	
5		bacover		Steve Stiles	
6		cover		George Metzger	
6		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
6		poem	Sun and Clap Happy	Carol Carr	
6		cartoons	Out Berkeley Way	Dave Rike	
6		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
6		bacover		Bill Rotsler	
6		illustration		Rotsler	
7		cover		Arthur Thomson	
7		editorial	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
7		article	Wheel of Futility	Walter Breen	

7		column	Our Man in George Metzger	George Metzger	
7		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
7		column	Fapa on Wry	Ted White	
7		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
7		column	Big Dorf's Special	Gary Deindorfer	
7		poem	Ode to Nuclear Attack	anon	7th grader, Norman, Okla.
7		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
7		lettercol	Letter Litter	Redd Boggs	
7		bacover		Steve Stiles	
8		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
8		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
8		illustration		Bhob Stewert	
9		cover		Cynthia Goldstone	
9		editorial	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
9		column	The Perforated Finger	Walt Willis	
9		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
9		poem	Come here, my dear	Carol Carr	
9		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
9		mailing comments	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
9		lettercol	Letter Litter		
9		bacover		Cynthia Goldstone	
9		illustration		Cynthia Goldstone	
10		cover		Cynthia Goldstone	
10		column	Our Man in George Metzger	George Metzger	
10		article	From a Celestial Galaxy	Carol Carr	
10		column	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
10		mailing comments	Looking Backward	Pete Graham	
10		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	
10		article	Bach in High Fidelity	Walter Breen	
10		mailing comments	Take Five	Carol Carr	
10		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
10		bacover		Cynthia Goldstone	
11		cover		Arthur Thomson	
11		article	Drugs, Hallucinations, and the Quest for Reality	Philip K. Dick	
11		column	The Perforated Finger	Walt Willis	
11		poem	Battlefield	Ray Nelson	
11		ramblings	Stuff	Carol Carr	
11		article	1926 And All That	Carl Brandon	
11		column	Our Man in George Metzger	George Metzger	
11		mailing comments	Comments on Comments on Comments on	Terry Carr	



11		cartoons	The Life and Hard Times of the Poo	Trina and Art Castillo	
11		mailing comments	Take Five	Carol Carr	
11		editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
11		fiction	A Curse	Tom Seidman	reprinted from THE SEID-MAN NEWSLETTER
11		lettercol	Letter Litter		
11		index	Lighthouse: The First Ten		
11		bacover		Ray Nelson	
			--- (Note: 12-13 missing from index) ---		
14		cover		Jack Gaughan	
14	3	article	Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected, and If So, What Becomes of Robert Heinlein?	Philip K. Dick	
14	7	article	Around the World with Thomas Disch	Thomas M. Disch	
14	17	article	Bright, Shiny Ideas and Inept Slapstick	Greg Benford	
14	21	article	Jack Schoenherr Gave My Dog Ticks	Jack Gaughan	
14	25	column	Minor Drag	Pete Graham	
14	34	fiction	Oh Pioneer	G. C. Edmondson	
14	37	article	The Western Outlaw: from cave in the Rock to Hole in the Wall	Pat Lupoff	
14	49	column	The Perforated Finger	Walt Willis	
14	52	column	Our Man in George Metzger	George Metzger	
14	64	ramblings	Stuff	Carol Carr	
14	70	article	On Professional Jealousy and Other Things	Alexei Panshin	
14	74	article	The Cultural Deprivation of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant	Gina Clarke	
14	77	editorial	Tailgate Ramble	Terry Carr	
14	83	lettercol	Letter Litter		
14		bacover		Jack Gaughan	
15		cover		Jack Gaughan	
15	3	editorial	Odd Ball	Terry Carr	
15	11	fiction	A Fictional Architecture	Samuel R. Delany	
15	24	ramblings	Stuff	Carol Carr	
15	32	article	Mr. & Mrs. Badlydrawn in Cartoonland	Gahan Wilson	
15	35	article	The Anima Archetype in Science Fantasy	Fritz Leiber	
15	42	speech	Project Boskone	Damon Knight	
15	46	poem	A Dream	Tom Disch	
15	47	article	Only One Color For a Dime	Pat Lupoff	
15	52	article	The Invaders vs. The Milford Mafia	Joanna Russ	
15	56	article	Technological Extrapolation in the Era of Enlightened Rigor	Richard A. Lupoff	
15	74	fiction	The Voice in the Garden	Harlan Ellison	
15	76	lettercol	Letter Litter		
15		bacover		Jack Gaughan	

## A Lacuna Filled

by JPC

**Y**ou are only as good as your resources but sometimes your resources let you down. The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick is an invaluable collection that expands exponentially our understanding of PKD. But it is not without flaws.

Consider this:

Last night I had a strange dream: I dreamed that two of my novels, FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID and MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE had become one novel, and the police general in TEARS, Felix Buckman, was a ranking police (Gestapo) officer of the Nazis; he had on the black SS uniform. Also I dreamed about a whole lot of written material dealing with this composite novel, an analysis of its meaning. It had to do with the opera "Wozzeck" which is a study of the degrading of a humble, uneducated man by an educated, aristocratic scientist who uses him in an experiment. Perhaps in an alternate world Felix Buckman was a Gestapo officer assigned to analyze me and eventually destroy me. I've felt for some time that in some weird way that I don't in any sense understand I knew General Buckman, that he is an actual person. In was president. In my speech I declared that eventually an even better track, Track C, would be substituted for Track B and there never would have been a President Nixon. So when I wrote TEARS I was writing about a police state USA that somehow once actually existed.

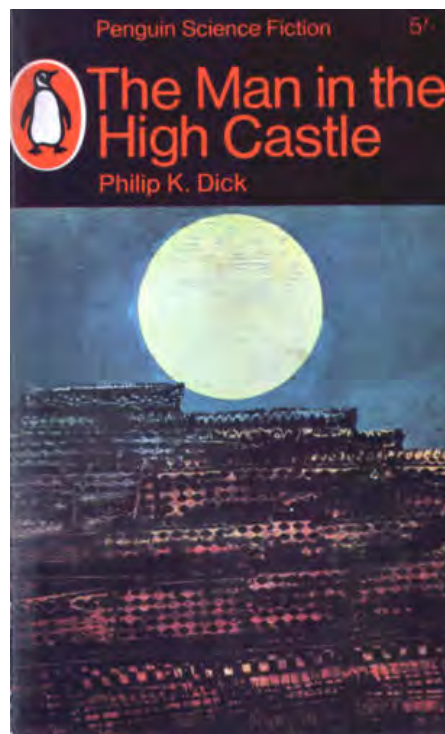
This simply makes no sense. What is Phil talking about? What the hell is Track B and C? Some truly impressive sleuthing on the parts of John and Perry has come to our rescue.

Dear Patrick:

In The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick: 1977 - 1979, letter to Laura Dick April 2, 1979, P.222 - 223, there is a part missing. Currently the last line of P. 222 to the first line of P. 223 reads:

"In was president."

This should read:



"In 1977 in France I delivered a speech in which I put forth an idea which in no way can I prove: that FLOW MY TEARS depicts an evil alternate world which we all—or some of us—actually lived in, but God abolished that world (which I called Track A in my speech) and substituted Track B, the world where Nixon was president"

Regards,

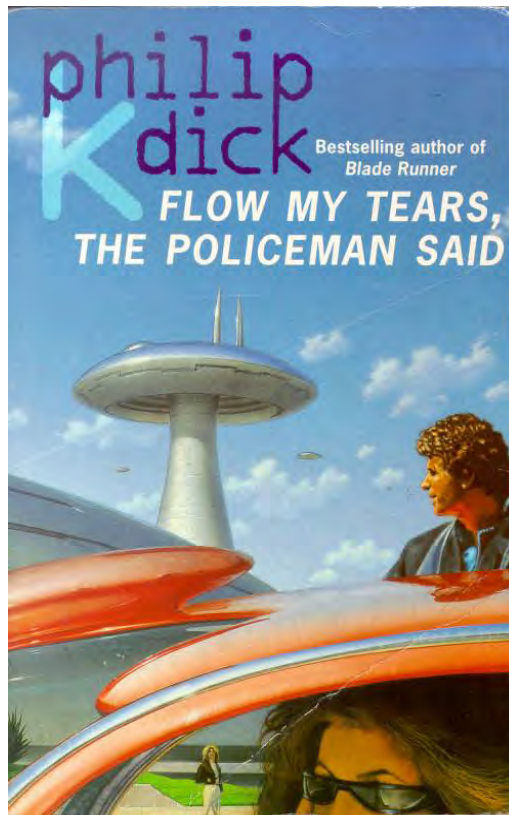
John Fairchild  
Perry Kinman

Now read the paragraph again with the missing words restored:

Last night I had a strange dream: I dreamed that two of my novels, FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID and MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE had become one novel, and the police general in TEARS, Felix Buckman, was a ranking police (Gestapo) of the Nazis; he had on the black SS uniform. Also I dreamed about a whole lot of written material dealing with this composite novel, an analysis of its mean-



ing. It had to do with the opera “Wozzeck” which is a study of the degrading of a humble, uneducated man by an educated, aristocratic scientist who uses him in an experiment. Perhaps in an alternate world Felix Buckman was a Gestapo officer assigned to analyze me and eventually destroy me. I’ve felt for some time that in some weird way that I don’t in any sense understand I knew General Buckman, that he is an actual person. *In 1977 in France I delivered a speech in which I put forth an idea which in no way can I prove: that FLOW MY TEARS depicts an evil alternate world which we all—or some of us—actually lived in, but God abolished that world (which I called Track A in my speech) and sub-*



*stituted Track B, the world where Nixon was president.* In my speech I declared that eventually an even better track, Track C, would be substituted for Track B and there never would have been a President Nixon. So when I wrote TEARS I was writing about a police state USA that somehow once actually existed.

It is not simply a matter of coherence being restored. What we have now is a fascinating expansion of the meaning of Phil’s novel. You know, a much needed research project would be a collection of Phil’s dreams. The ones I can think of off-hand are very strange and remind me of Poe’s “The Raven”:

“Deep into that darkness peering,  
long I stood there, wondering,  
fearing,  
doubting, dreaming dreams no  
mortal ever dared to dream before.”

*“It’s a cardboard universe, Jamis,  
and if you lean too hard against  
it you fall through,  
but god knows into what.”*

*(PKD in a Letter to Jamis: Nov 23, 1972)*

## Those we love, loved others too

By Nick Buchanan © 2016

If you know your Philip K. Dick stories well ... can you work out which one this is using the following clues...?

- A man goes to a meeting only to find he is not who he thought he was.
- He has memories of a past which are contradicted by the memories of other characters. He says:  
"Yes. I had some false ideas planted in my mind. Were they put there with a purpose?" (p.36)
- Typically he is met by a cruel woman who delights in his disorientation:  
"You really haven't the faintest idea what this is all about? You have no purpose, no plan for dealing with it? You're just moving along in the great dark?" (p.42)
- The story is peppered with discussions concerning the cortex and the thalamus.
- There are quotes from Ancient Greeks, philosophers and General Semantic concepts are liberally sprinkled throughout.
- In the book, the populace are forced to play games in the form of quizzes. Those who succeed gain the best jobs on earth.
- Some characters feel that they just don't fit into the universe they find themselves in.
- People board robot planes which talk to them, giving them advice.

Still not sure which story? Surely you recognize all the hallmarks of Dick's oeuvre - those recurrent themes which he explored and obsessed about throughout his career? *The insecurity of the protagonist... the false memories... the cold female... the interest in the cortex and thalamus... the preoccupation with philosophy and General Semantics... the interest in Games for high stakes... the inanimate objects which patronize and give advice.*

Perhaps the reason you can't quite place this one is because it wasn't by Philip K. Dick at all, but by someone Phil admired immensely: A. E. Van Vogt. The book I have been

referring to is 'The World of Null-A' which was published in 1948 (originally serialized in 1945 by John W. Campbell' in his **Astounding Stories** in three parts). It should be remembered that for most of 1945, Dick was a very impressionable 16 year old. He devoured pulp science fiction throughout his teens.

There is no doubt that Van Vogt's work paved the way for Philip K Dick. In particular Van Vogt's philosophical speculations concerning the fragility of identity and the precariousness of reality. Although Dick is the greater talent, he did stand on Van Vogt's shoulders. Nevertheless, Van Vogt remains a huge talent in his own right – and worthy of readership. When we read Van Vogt we gain a greater understanding of Phil. Indeed their central preoccupations are much the same – except that Van Vogt was ploughing these fields long before Phil.

Throughout his whole life, Phil retained his love of Van Vogt's work. Fellow writer, Brian Aldiss in *Trillion Year Spree* says of Phil, '[He] learned to love the genre through the magazines long before his literary tastes were formed. He never quite recovered from that first infatuation with forbidden Van Vogtian delights.' (p.334).

The reference to Van Vogt being 'forbidden' probably relates to the fact that pulps were regarded as trash and reading them was frowned upon. As Phil said in a 1977 interview: 'I remember when I purchased my first published story. Somebody said to me, "Do you read that kind of stuff?" And I said, "Madam, I not only read it, I write it." And people would say to me, "Well, why don't you write something serious? Why do you write science fiction? Write something serious."... Nevertheless, I did as well as I could. I

wrote the most profound, most imaginative novels I could ...' (From the **2ème Festival International de la SF de Metz, Metz, France**, September 19-25, 1977. Transcribed, edited, annotated and with afterword by Frank C. Bertrand - PKD Otaku #22, p.4).

Aldiss's use of 'forbidden' might also be a reference to the fact that when Van Vogt's work was first being widely enjoyed, a fellow writer, Damon Knight, waged a cam-

***Surely you recognize  
all the hallmarks  
of Dick's oeuvre?***



paigned to discredit it. He wrote bitter essays in which he stated that: '[Van Vogt] is no giant; he is a pygmy who has learned to operate an overgrown typewriter.'

He described *The World of Null-A* (which had so impressed Phil) as: "...one of the worst allegedly adult science fiction stories ever published."

And it didn't end there... Knight went on... 'In general van Vogt seems to me to fail consistently as a writer in these elementary ways:

1. His plots do not bear examination.
2. His choice of words and his sentence-structure are fumbling and insensitive.
3. He is unable either to visualize a scene or to make a character seem real.'

And on... 'If you can only throw your reasoning powers out of gear—something many van Vogt fans find easy to do—you'll enjoy this one.'" (said in a review of Van Vogt's *Empire of the Atom*).

In 1965, Knight formed the Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA) which began (in 1975) giving a *Grand Master Award* to those who had made an outstanding contribution to writing in the genre. But the organisation was rife with politics and dogma and Knight's scathing words held sway. Despite his major contribution to the genre, Van Vogt was effectively 'blocked' from receiving the award until 1995 (just five years before his death and only after Knight had received his own award).

Robert J. Sawyer, a Canadian Science Fiction writer (*Flash Forward*, *Calculating God*, etc. ) said this: 'There was no doubt that van Vogt should have received this honor much earlier — the injustice of him being overlooked, at least in part because of damnable SFWA politics, had so incensed Harlan Ellison, a man with an impeccable moral compass,

that he'd lobbied hard on the SciFi Channel and elsewhere on van Vogt's behalf.'

Knight's motivation was clear to even the most basic understandings of human psychology — he was jealous of Van Vogt's popularity. Furthermore, Knight only believed in one kind of writing - *his kind*. People with greater sensitivity can find meaning in all kinds

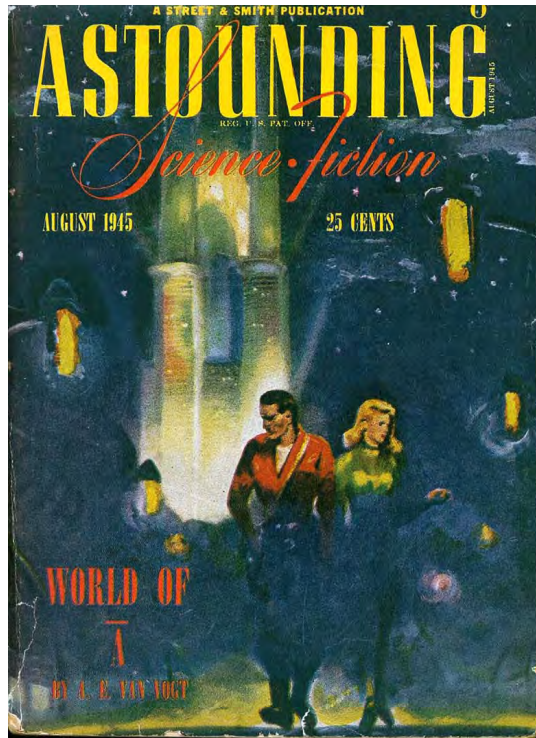
of places - especially if their enquiry is intelligent. They know that the buffet of life has much to commend it, and they don't confine themselves to savouries only. It's silly to blame a gateaux for not being a steak. Both have their place.

Knight did a similar hatchet-job on Richard Matheson's outstanding '*The Shrinking Man*,' dismissing it entirely because it was not 'true science fiction' and even calling it 'anti science-fiction' (In *Search of Wonder* by Damon Knight). In other words it was to be avoided because it wasn't something it had ever claimed to be! We are not talking about the difference between science fiction and fantasy here, we are talking about snobbery and gate-keeping. This is not

about *sorting* this is about *spite*.

In the 1950's Knight did everything he could to dismantle Van Vogt's career, and because Knight was seen as an authority (and founder of the SFWA) few dared to disagree with his hard line and his acid jibes. When scholars sneer, they have tremendous influence over wannabee scholars and any others lacking vertebrae. Scholarship can very easily become a tiny club where egos massage one another and cowardly, knee-jerk reactions hold sway.

The same small-minded perceptions kept Dick's fantasy gem *Cosmic Puppets* out of print for decades. A revered scholar, Darko Suvin in his overly didactic '*Artifice as refuge and world view: Philip K Dick's Foci*' described *Cos-*



**'we are talking about snobbery and gate-keeping'**

*mic Puppets* as one of three Dick novels 'best forgotten' (I knew you'd ask, ... *Dr. Futurity* and *The Game Players of Titan*) (*Writers of the 21st Century Series*, Ed. Olander & Greenberg p.80).

This *Cosmic Puppets* detour is simply a reminder that history repeats itself and that it's wise to go directly to the work first – with an open mind and a healthy scepticism. Dogmatic commentary should never precede the work itself. When there is the moon and a finger pointing at the moon, my money is on the moon itself. Just as *Cosmic Puppets* became airbrushed out of history, so too did Van Vogt – and for similar reasons.

Ironically, the qualities that Knight found repellent in Van Vogt's work were the very things which delighted Philip K. Dick; namely the logical inconsistencies, the wild intrusions and the flights of fancy. As Gregg Rickman notes: 'Van Vogt was one of the first authors to give the workings of the mind full play in his work and unlike most of Campbell's writers he was not hard and cold and unemotional, in the manner of Hal Clement, Asimov and Heinlein.' (*To the High Castle: Philip K. Dick A Life 1928- 1962* p.105).

Dick also wrote plots which were full of inconsistencies or made no logical sense - they're packed with changes and contradictions. And like Van Vogt's work, Dick's exerts a tremendous imaginative power - to the point where his stories work like a spell which holds the reader until long after the book is finished - feeling quite different than before. Who cares if stories suddenly lurch in unexpected ways? - What a ride! What an experience! What an exploration into unknown territory!

In 1954, Phil attended the World Science Fiction Convention in San Francisco (Sir Francis Drake Hotel, 3-6 September). Phil was by then a new and rising star in the SF firmament (he was 25 years old). The gathering gave Phil the opportunity to meet many of his idols, not least of all A. E. Van Vogt. Phil

recalled "someone taking a photograph of A.E. Van Vogt and me, and someone saying 'the old and the new.' But what a miserable excuse for 'the new.'" (*To the High Castle: Philip K Dick A Life 1928- 1962* p.278).

Years later in 1978, Phil said in a letter to Joseph Milicia (an SF writer and critic) that Abendsen in *The Man in the High Castle* 'was based on A.E. Van Vogt whom I met in 1954 and admire both as a person and as a writer.' (*Philip K. Dick: Selected Letters* - August 7, 1978)

Just as Dick once used the I Ching to determine the direction of his writing in *The Man in the High Castle*, Van Vogt used to enlist the help of his subconscious mind to assist him with plot lines. Here's how Van Vogt described the process:

"I took the family alarm clock and went into the spare bedroom that night, and set it for an hour and a half. And thereafter, when I was working on a story, I would awaken myself every hour and a half, through the night—force myself to wake up, think of the story, try to solve it, and even as I was thinking about it I would fall back asleep. And in the morning, there would be a solution, for that particular story problem. Now, that's penetrating the subconscious, in my opinion. It's penetrating it in a way that I don't think they'll be able to do any better, thirty centuries from now." (Van Vogt interview in *Who Writes Science Fiction*, by Charles Platt p.152).

Phil made references to Van Vogt's work throughout his whole life. In Brian Aldiss's *Trillion Year Spree* (which was first published in 1986, four years after Phil's death) Phil joked about his religious beliefs being similar to things described in The World of Null-A and the subsequent Gosseyn books: 'I sound like [I'm] an A.E. Van Vogt character.

*Guys walking around and he rotates tyres... and suddenly discovers that he's got an extra brain you know, and he's really from another galaxy and can walk through walls*





(laughter). *Boy, I'm not a man who rotates tyres. I'm John the Baptist!* (*Trillion Year Spree* – Brian Aldiss p.219)

When interviewed by Charles Platt in 1978, Phil again made reference to Van Vogt's influence on him, in particular Van Vogt's *The World of Null-A*: *'There was something about that which absolutely fascinated me. It had a mysterious quality, it alluded to things unseen, there were puzzles presented which were never adequately explained. I found in it a numinous quality. I began to get an idea of a mysterious quality in the universe which could be dealt with in science fiction.'* **Who Writes Science Fiction** - Charles Platt (p.164)

Van Vogt's novels have a mystical quality, they often imply an 'otherness' just out of reach, a hidden influence which shapes and organizes - and which, in the final analysis, eludes us. The full picture is occluded. But its effects are known. Van Vogt's novels also hint at the fact that our current awareness is very limited - even the way that we think is too narrow (Aristotelian). *The World of Null-A* was in part a suggestion that there were other ways of thinking (Non-Aristotelian) which could yield rich material - indeed material which simply would not be available to logic.

Edward DeBono has made a career writing books about one type of Null-A thinking - 'Lateral Thinking.' Fine books they are too. Logic can only deduce from existing material, whereas Lateral thinking can bring in new material (random) and use it to solve problems; with Lateral thinking one can reverse a relationship, challenge a dominant

idea, use an impossibility as an intermediary step or swap hats to explore different aspects (e.g. *Six Thinking Hats*). I had the privilege of Teaching 'Thinking' (as a distinct module) to Graphic Design students for many years.

The idea that our bandwidth is often too narrow is something that preoccupied Phil in his life and his writings. He knew that there was more to 'see' and that we are currently not getting the full picture - as illustrated by one of Phil's favourite quotes is from the New Testament:

*"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."* (1 Corinthians 13v12 KJV)

Alfred Elton Van Vogt was born sixteen years before Philip K. Dick, in 1912 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His parents were Dutch and he made his first sale in the genre to John W. Campbell Jr

for *Astounding Magazine* in 1939 (*'Black Destroyer'*). Phil would have been a receptive eleven year old the year this came out. During the following 1940's and 50's, Van Vogt was prolific - a pulp favourite.

Incidentally, *Black Destroyer* was later re-used by Van Vogt as part of his *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* (1950). In this novel he introduced the science of 'Nexialism' - it is likely that Asimov saw this before he introduced the similar concept of 'psycho-history' in his, no famous, *Foundation* (which came out the following year - 1951).

Van Vogt was fascinated by the way the mind works, the



From Nick Buchanan's collection

nature of the unconscious, the role of dreams and hypnosis - indeed he wrote *The Hypnotism Handbook* (1956). It is easy to see, from the books and authors whom Phil quoted throughout his career that he and his hero shared many areas of enquiry - and they both used such research to create novels which challenge perceptions and throw new light on difficult ideas. They could both create dreamlike (and nightmarish) scenarios which were unpredictable and sometimes terrifying. For me, Dick is the greater craftsman - and books like *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* show the extent of Dick's tremendous inventiveness and artistry.

Although many fans want Phil's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* to stand for their 'Crazy drug fueled author,' it clearly has its origins in the inspiration of writers like A. E. Van Vogt. Incidentally, whenever I refute the idea that Phil's imagination was forged in the furnace of drug-taking, it is usually assumed that I am expressing disdain for drugs - and that I don't want my hero to be 'tainted' by them. On the contrary, I wish all drugs were legalized and I abhor the criminalization of the drug-user (especially those non-taxable drug users).

The idea that *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* could ONLY be written by someone on drugs is an affront to the power of the human imagination. It is reductive and infantile. It's as cheap, cowardly and mistaken as those who say 'Ringo was a crap drummer.' As with most things, when people all think alike, no one thinks much at all. And boy, that herd is growing.

"Each paragraph - sometimes each sentence - of my brand of science fiction has a gap in it, an unreality condition. In order to make it real, the reader must add the missing parts. He cannot do this out of his past associations. There are no past associations. So he must fill in the gaps from the creative part of his brain." - A.E. van Vogt

Phil was incredibly well-read, and he read for the joy of it. Amongst others, he read and liked Kafka, Borges, Becket, Shakespeare, Dante, Teilhard de Chardin, Kurt Vonnegut, Nathaniel West, Ray Bradbury, Poul Anderson, Alfred Bester, Roger Zelazny, Gustave Flaubert, Robert Heinlein,

Martin Heidegger, James Joyce, Carl Jung, Virginia Woolf, Heraclitus, - to name but a few. But no one had such a strong influence on him (as a writer) than A. E. Van Vogt. Furthermore, Phil showed great courage in championing Van Vogt *throughout the decades* when scholars all around him were sneering and jeering.

I recognize that Van Vogt is not as great as Philip K. Dick, but I feel that we should honour him as Phil did. When I read Van Vogt, I really enjoy the journey - and it is obvious

to me, *exactly* why Phil liked his stories. Phil wasn't stupid *and he found Van Vogt very worthwhile.*

Jeannette Winterson - the author of the profound and disturbing 'Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit,' once said that 'Fiction is the best way of discussing reality' - and I think that both Van Vogt and Dick used their stories to 'discuss reality' - *What is real? What is human? What is consciousness? What is a thought? What is a memory? What is identity? What is time? etc.*

If you are a fan of Dick, then you owe Van Vogt a huge debt. We all do. This piece is a way of acknowledging that.



A.E. Van Vogt (ca 1963)

I shall give the last word to Brian Aldiss (as quoted by Gregg Rickman in *To the High Castle: Philip K Dick A Life 1928- 1962* (p.287): "I think it's very clear, Phil has said so, that Van Vogt was a major influence on him. Phil took the pure, almost dreamlike play of ideas that you get in that Van-Vogtian stream of ideas, and improved it throughout his career until he was writing almost dreamlike masterpieces. Dick began as a smart imitator of Van Vogt and ended up as a wizard. Most careers in SF flow the other way about."

Nick Buchanan is the author of [What Happens in Shakespeare's King Lear](#) and [What Happens in Shakespeare's Macbeth](#) - both are 500 page study guides to Shakespeare's great works. He is also the graphic designer responsible for the layout and appearance of PKD Otaku.

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FOREWORD BY  
TIM POWERS

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